



# MONTANA LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

## Legislative Fiscal Division

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Legislative Fiscal Analyst  
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October 1, 2003

TO: Legislative Finance Committee

FR: Jim Standaert  
Senior Fiscal Analyst

RE: K-12 Renewal Commission

House Bill 736, passed during the last legislative session, establishes a K-12 public school renewal commission to propose changes and new provisions regarding components of K-12 public education in Montana, including but not limited to:

1. The revenue available for public education;
2. The structure of school district governance
3. The methods of funding public education
4. The role of the state government in public education
5. The role of the federal government in public education

The Commission shall submit a final report of its findings and recommendations to the education and local government interim committee by September 15, 2004. The commission may recommend legislation to the 59<sup>th</sup> legislature based on the Commission's findings. The Commission may address additional issues beyond those listed above.

The commission has held three meetings beginning August 18<sup>th</sup>. The commission has plans to meet twelve more times, every three weeks or so. The Commission is facilitated by the Montana Consensus Council. The legislature appropriated \$10,000 for the Commission, and the rest of the cost will come from donations.

The Commission has 28 members. The Commission has heard presentations on the overall structure of K-12 finance, the structure of school district governance, historical revenues available for K-12, shifts in property taxes between classes of taxpayers, special education programs and funding, the roles of the state and federal governments in K-12.

The Commission has been working on key questions that it will attempt to answer, and identify the resources needed to answer the questions. The Commission struggled with more than thirty questions, and settled on a few key questions:

1. What is a basic quality education
2. What resources are adequate to achieve a basic quality education?
3. What distribution mechanism will deliver these resources to K-12 in an equitable and adequate way?